
Ecology & Parks Committee

E2SSB 5138

Brief Description: Creating an integrated climate change response strategy.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Rockefeller, Ranker, Jacobsen, Shin, Kohl-Welles, Kline and Pridemore).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Establishes a science advisory group to provide independent scientific advice to state agencies.
- Requires the Department of Ecology to compile an initial climate change response strategy by December 1, 2011.
- Requires the Department of Ecology to complete an initial climate impacts assessment report by December 1, 2012.
- Requires the state to develop an integrated climate change response strategy by December 1, 2013.
- Requires state agencies to strive to incorporate adaptation plans of action as priority activities when planning or designing agency policies and programs.
- Provides a null and void clause.

Hearing Date: 3/20/09

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339)

Background:

Preparation and Adaptation Working Groups (PAWGs) were established in 2007 to assist the Department of Ecology (DOE) and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development in developing recommendations for the Governor on how Washington can prepare and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The DOE and the Departments of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources (DNR) led PAWGs that examined climate change impacts, and identified preparation and adaptation strategies and additional research needs. The PAWGs made their recommendations to the Climate Advisory Team in December 2007, and have not been reconvened.

Summary of Bill:

Integrated Climate Change Response Strategy.

The DOE, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the DNR, and the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) must develop an integrated climate change response strategy by December 1, 2013 to better enable state and local agencies, public and private businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to prepare for, address, and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The DOE must serve as a central clearinghouse for relevant scientific and technical information about the impacts of climate change on Washington's ecology, economy, and society, as well as serve as a central convener for the development of vital programs and necessary policies to help with adaptation. The WDFW must focus on issues relating to biodiversity, resiliency, and vulnerability of the natural environment. The DNR must focus on the vulnerability and resiliency of forests, forest fires, and forest health. The WSDOT must focus on gathering and assessing information relating to infrastructure projects, and vulnerability of the built environment. However, the WSDOT's obligations are subject to the availability of funds.

The integrated climate change response strategy should address the impact of and adaptation to climate change, as well as the regional capacity to undertake actions, existing ecosystem and resource management concerns, and health and economic risks. In addition, the integrated climate change response strategy should include a range of scenarios for the purposes of planning in order to assess project vulnerability and reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

Science Advisory Group.

The science advisory group is created and must provide independent scientific advice to state agencies.

The chair of the science advisory group must be a scientist with recognized expertise in a field of science essential to preparing for and adapting to climate change. The Governor must appoint the chair of the science advisory group; the chair serves for a term of three years.

In establishing the science advisory group, the DOE must request that the Washington Academy of Sciences provide a list of candidates to the chair of the science advisory group. The list of candidates should reflect the full range of scientific disciplines involved in climate change. The chair of the science advisory group may also seek advice from the scientific community to develop membership for the science advisory group.

Initial Climate Change Response Strategy.

By December 1, 2011, the DOE must compile an initial climate change response strategy, including information and data from the WDFW, DNR, and WSDOT that: (1) summarizes the best known science on climate change impacts to Washington; (2) assesses Washington's

vulnerability to identified climate change impacts; (3) prioritizes solutions that can be implemented within and across state agencies; and (4) identifies recommended funding mechanisms and technical resources for implementing solutions.

Initial Climate Impacts Assessment.

The DOE, in collaboration with the WDFW, DNR, and WSDOT, must complete an initial climate impacts assessment report that includes the status of the integrated climate change response strategy and provide it to the Legislature by December 1, 2012.

Adaptation Plans of Action.

State agencies must strive to incorporate adaptation plans of action as priority activities when planning or designing agency policies and programs. Agencies must consider: (1) the integrated climate change response strategy when designing, planning, and funding infrastructure projects; and (2) incorporating natural resource adaptation actions and alternative energy sources when designing and planning infrastructure projects.

Funding.

If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number is not provided by June 30, 2009 in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.